When will the interchange be built?

In 2001, HDR Engineering Inc., a consulting firm, conducted a study of the Old Naches Highway and US 12 intersection and surrounding vicinity. The purpose of the study was to gather information and develop possible interchange alternatives to guide the preliminary planning process. Various public meetings were held to both inform the public and to solicit input and guidance in the design of the project.

February 2001	HDR Engineering Inc. contracted to Study section of US highway 12 at the intersection of Old Naches Highway.
April 2001	HDR conducts the first open house event intended to inform the public and gather their input and ideas.
May 2001	HDR conducts a second open house event to keep the public appraised, gather additional input, and to refine possible design alternatives.
June 2001	HDR conducts a third open house event further refining the design alternatives and continuing to engage the public in the selection process.
June 2001	HDR completes the study for preliminary design concepts.
March 2002	WSDOT conducts a Value Engineering Study to review and make suggestions on the HDR study.
September 2002	WSDOT holds a fourth open house to update the public and gather further information and public opinion.
July 2003	Legislature passes Transportation Funding Package which provides $37.3 million to construct this project in 2011.
Summer 2006	WSDOT will conduct more open house events and begin the design of the interchange.
Summer 2013	Advertise the project for construction.
Summer 2015	Project will be complete and open to traffic.

TRANS-ACTION
MOVING YAKIMA AREA'S TRANSPORTATION FORWARD

For More Information

WSDOT – South Central Region
Troy Suing, Project Engineer
P.O. Box 12560
Yakima, WA 98909-2560
Phone – (509) 577-1703
E-mail – SuingT@wsdot.wa.gov
www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/US12/OldNachesHwyInterchange/

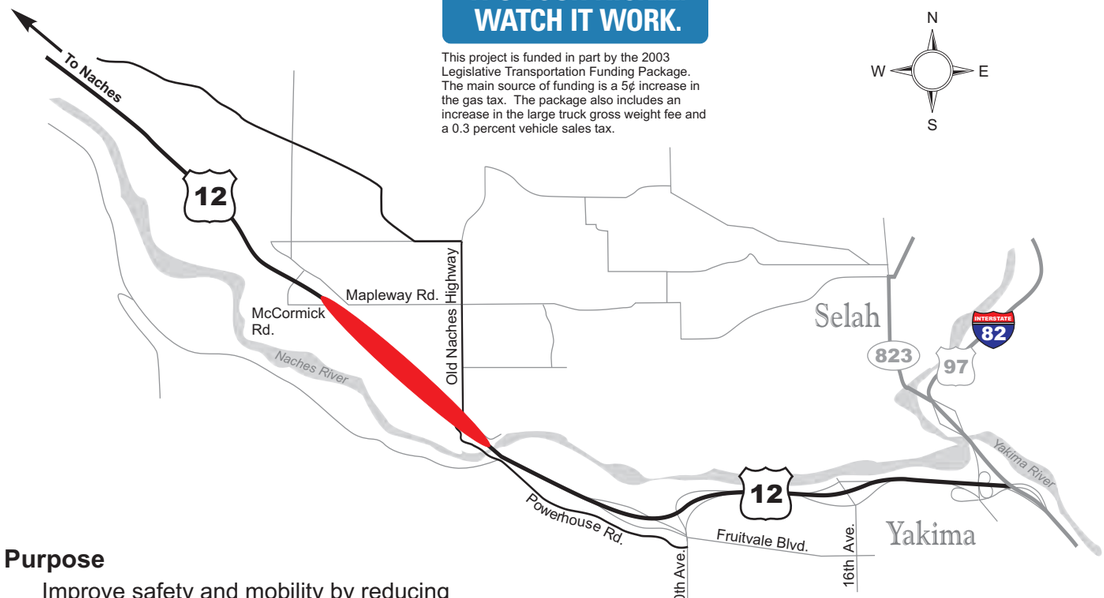
Updated August 2006

Washington State Department of Transportation

US 12 – Old Naches Highway Interchange

IT'S YOUR NICKEL. WATCH IT WORK.

This project is funded in part by the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package. The main source of funding is a 5¢ increase in the gas tax. The package also includes an increase in the large truck gross weight fee and a 0.3 percent vehicle sales tax.



Purpose

Improve safety and mobility by reducing accidents and congestion.

US 12 is a major east-west transportation corridor, serving both regional and local traffic. Population growth and economic development in the Yakima area have caused increased traffic, accidents, and congestion at existing intersections on US 12 west of Yakima. This project will reduce accidents and relieve congestion at the Old Naches Highway and surrounding intersections with US 12.

Project Description

Upgrade the intersection of Old Naches Highway and US 12 from a traffic signal to a "grade separated" (separation of cross traffic) interchange. Create frontage roads to provide local access to the new interchange.

WSDOT will evaluate several locations and configurations for the new interchange. Public involvement and participation in the design process will be encouraged.

Estimated Total Project Cost

Total: $35.8 million

Note: The Estimated Total Project Cost includes engineering, right of way, and construction costs.

Project Timeline

Start Design:	Summer 2006
Advertise Project:	Summer 2013
Open to Traffic:	Summer 2015

Why do we need an interchange?

Between 1990 and 1997 the number and severity of accidents at the intersection of Old Naches Highway/Powerhouse Road and US Highway 12 nearly doubled. In a 1996 comparison with similar intersections on high-speed divided highways, this intersection ranked second highest in our region and eighth in the state for number and severity of accidents.

WSDOT wanted to quickly address the rising accidents at this intersection. Building an interchange was the solution; however, there was insufficient funding for such a major construction project. In 1997 a traffic signal was installed at the intersection as a temporary solution until additional funds could be secured. The number of accidents at the intersection declined after the signal installation but began to climb again as traffic volumes increased.

The traffic signal has always been considered a temporary solution for two reasons:

(1) The number of vehicles using this intersection continues to increase. Due to population growth in the surrounding area and the increased safety and convenience provided by the signal, traffic volumes here have nearly doubled since 1997. Currently as many as 22,000 vehicles per day use this intersection.

(2) Drivers react in different ways to a traffic signal on a high-speed highway. Some drivers slow down to stop, while others accelerate in an attempt to beat the yellow light before it turns red. These conflicting reactions frequently cause rear-end collisions.

The safest solution is an interchange.

From the time the traffic signal was installed, rear-end collisions have risen over 400%. This trend is not expected to decline since this stretch of US 12 is anticipated to have traffic volumes as high as 35,000 vehicles per day by the year 2024.

Old Naches Highway / US 12 intersection

How will an interchange help?

An interchange will help reduce the number and severity of accidents by separating high-speed traffic on US 12 from cross-traffic on Old Naches Highway/Powerhouse Road. It will also improve traffic flow by decreasing congestion and eliminating the stop on US 12. These improvements will increase the safety, efficiency, and capacity of our transportation network for years of future growth.

Constructing the interchange and closing other nearby highway accesses will upgrade this section of US 12 to an access controlled freeway. Limiting direct access will allow much safer vehicle travel onto and off of the highway. County roads and new frontage roads will connect to US 12 at the new interchange, and all traffic will enter or exit US 12 using a freeway ramp. Access control already exists on US 12 east of the 40th Avenue interchange, and this project would extend the limited access condition from 40th Avenue west thru the new interchange.

Where will the interchange be located?

The final location and design of the interchange have not been determined. HDR Engineering Inc. and the WSDOT developed various interchange alternatives to evaluate how the interchange might fit with existing features in the area. Public input, engineering, environmental impacts, and cost considerations all play a vital part in the design process and will ultimately decide the location and configuration of the interchange. Design of this project is scheduled to commence when funding becomes available in 2006.

How much will the interchange cost?

Until the design of the interchange is complete, only an estimate of the cost can be determined. There are several features in the area which could significantly impact the cost of the project.

Naches River	Local Businesses	Golf Course	Water Main
Flood Plain	Private Residences	Fire Station	Fiber Optics
Railroad	Auto Salvage Yards	Radio Towers	Utility lines

WSDOT will locate and design the interchange to minimize impacts to these features, but they can not all be avoided and must be addressed.

Measures to address these factors are part of the cost of building the interchange. A few examples of possible scenarios include but are not limited to:

(1) Building retaining walls and bridges to cross over US 12 and the railroad tracks
(2) Extending ramps and frontage roads to avoid the radio towers, or moving the towers to another location
(3) Relocating fiber optics, utility lines, or water mains
(4) Constructing local road extensions to connect with the new interchange.

These additional measures alone could cost $10–15 million.

Inflation also continues to impact the project cost. If the interchange could be designed and built today, the estimated total project cost would be roughly $31.4 million. However, construction funds from the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package ("nickel tax") are not available until 2011. Inflating the estimate to 2011 dollars increases the total project cost to over $38 million.

Every year this project is delayed the cost increases, the amount of traffic increases, and so does the number of accidents and loss of life and property. Constructing this interchange will improve our quality of life by helping to reduce those accidents and by improving the flow of traffic to homes and businesses now and in the years to come.

Fiber Optic Station

Radio Towers

Business / Railroad